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MEDICAL CONDITIONS AT CURTEA DE ARGEŞ

CURTEA DE ARGEŞ is a small town of 6,831 inhabitants (in 1930), situated in the valley of the River Argeş, at an altitude of 1,400 feet.

A SERIES of wells supply the town with water, there being no system of pipes to supply running water. The drainage system is necessarily of a primitive type, the dry closet type being the one in use.

THE TOWN possesses two hospitals:

(1) A general hospital with pavilion for epidemic cases.

(2) Home for incurables—a branch of a nerve clinic in Bucharest.

THE GENERAL HOSPITAL is situated in the centre of the town on a slight eminence, a few yards from the main street. It consists of two wards, one for men and one for women. The cases are mixed, medical and surgical cases being nursed in the same ward. There are fifteen beds for men and fifteen for women. In addition there are two small wards for clean surgical cases, each containing two beds.

THE BEDS are of the usual hospital type, but placed close together about three feet apart. The mattresses and pillows are stuffed with straw and are very hard. The patients wear their own clothes. This being summer, less than one half of the beds were in use. The villagers refuse to come to hospital in summer, when there is work to be done in the fields, unless in cases of stern necessity. A belief in witchcraft and secret remedies is prevalent, so that progress as regards treatment is hampered. Epidemics of dysentery and typhoid are common. Tuberculosis is widespread, and goitre is found in all the villages in this valley. Cretinism in the children is untreated, and most villages contain cases. No medication of the water supply is undertaken. Pulmonary tuberculosis is treated in sanatoria, but other cases of tuberculosis are admitted here. Cancer is also common, but is not dealt with here—the cases are sent to Bucharest for radium treatment.

164 Rickets[1] is unknown, and difficult labour among peasant women is rare, though puerperal fever is common. In some instances, if there is a midwife, she is shared by several [847] villages. A law has recently been passed forbidding attempts at abortion, but it is not strictly enforced. There are a good many infant deaths. Maternal morbidity is not high, in [142] spite of the prevalence of puerperal fever. The women as a whole are robust, of good physique and inured to hardship. [757] The French treatment of sepsis by induced (turpentine) abscess is common and is found to be very successful, the fever running its course in 7-8 days, with low mortality rate. [855] Children are breast-fed, feeding bottles being unknown. The feeding continues until the age of one year or longer. Infantile paralysis is unknown in this district, though it does occur in other parts of the country. Rheumatism and arthritis are common.

743 A SMALL operating theatre is attached to the hospital[1] for
752 emergency cases like suppurating appendices and ruptured hernia, other cases being sent to the hospitals in larger towns. Small surgical operations are also performed. The table is convenient, in that it can tilt at any angle from head to foot, but it cannot be lowered or raised at will. The only light is a small electric globe high up in the ceiling, with no facilities for lowering. Operations are, however, mostly done in daylight. If necessary, lamps or even candles are requisitioned. A small room for sterilising purposes opens off the theatre.

●743 THE PAVILION for infectious cases is situated about twenty
164 feet from the main building, in close proximity to the staff house and kitchen. Its beds were empty at the moment of inspection. Scarlet fever is the most common epidemic in this vicinity, and the beds were full one month ago. Epidemics of dysentery and typhoid also occur. Typhus is not known here, though frequent in Bessarabia. Diphtheria is fairly common.

759 THERE[2] ARE a medical doctor and a surgeon in attendance, the latter being only part-time.

743 THE HOME for the incurables[2] was next visited. It is a handsome villa, situated near the main street, but farther from the centre of the town. As before stated, it is a branch of the nerve clinic in Bucharest, and is under the supervision of

1 [in Curtea De Arges -- Analyst]

743 Prof. Dr. Cantacuzene, who visits it two or three times yearly. A doctor is in charge with a Sister of Mercy as nurse and two untrained local nurses, one for the men and one for the women. There are thirty male beds and twenty female beds. The cases are mainly paralytic and epileptic, with a certain number of war invalids and diabetics. The beds were mostly empty when seen, as the cases are ambulant.

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Bathroom and lavatory accommodation in both hospitals is necessarily primitive.

759 There are three other doctors in the town—one for the military, another for the insurance societies, and a third for the direction of general sanitary work, corresponding to a British Medical Officer of Health. The headquarters of the last-named are at the Mayor's office. Medical inspection takes place once a month in the schools, each child being examined thoroughly each time. There are no dentists in the town, extraction of teeth, etc., being performed by the local doctors. Vaccination is obligatory and is done when the child is one month old. At the age of seven, on entry into school, a second vaccination is required, and in the case of a boy, at the age of 18, when he begins his premilitary service.

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758 As regards payment for medical treatment, poor people who cannot afford to pay are treated free, otherwise 10-20 lei is charged for a consultation and 20-30 lei per day in hospital. Most of the patients are insured against sickness by paying regular contributions under State guidance.

759 Doctors receive their training in one of the three centres, Cluj, Bucharest or Jassy. Cluj is considered the best equipped. So far there are no medical text-books in Roumanian. German text-books and German medical traditions are followed at Cluj, while French text-books and French traditions are in use at Bucharest and Jassy. One year is spent in preparation, Chemistry, Physics, etc., being studied. Five years of actual medical work, theoretical and practical, follow. For the past eight years a further course of two years in specialised work at a hospital has been insisted upon.

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[in Curtea De Arges -- Analyst]